

Dear Colleague:

As you may know, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) provides Federal funds to feed children during the summer at locations throughout a community, such as schools, parks, and community centers. In areas that operate year-round schools, SFSP can be used to feed children in other seasons when they are on vacation (off-track).

The SFSP can be an important resource to support many of your members' summer programs. Not only does SFSP help ensure that children in a summer program are eating nutritious food and are fully engaged throughout the day, but the food acts as a magnet, drawing the children to the program. The reimbursement also provides a significant and dependable funding stream to help sustain summer programs. If a program serves breakfast and lunch to 50 children for seven weeks, the reimbursement could be over \$6,500. Unfortunately, the SFSP is substantially underutilized. It reaches only 14 percent of the children who rely on free or reduced-price meals during the regular school year.

Any school, local government agency, or non-profit organization can sponsor SFSP, which provides reimbursement for up to two meals a day at sites in low-income areas or at summer programs that serve primarily low-income children. Sponsors receive Federal reimbursement from USDA and are responsible for administering the program at the feeding sites. Sponsors can have feeding sites throughout the community, including those which are supervised by other organizations.

We have formed a partnership to encourage broader use of SFSP, and we need your help in promoting this very needed and underutilized program. We encourage you to get the word out on SFSP to your members. Enclosed are some useful materials on the program, including a model newsletter that can be used in your publications. More information and a list of State agency contacts are available at USDA's Child Nutrition website, www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/summer. Additional materials may be downloaded from the website or obtained from your State agency.

Your members or affiliates can help support SFSP by:

- Becoming a sponsor, or a program site under an existing sponsor
- Preparing and selling meals to other sponsors (for example, a school could vend meals for another Summer Food sponsor)
- Encouraging organizations in their community to sponsor SFSP
- Providing activities, volunteers and nutrition education materials to local sites
- Sharing information on SFSP with others in their communities.

Together, we can make a difference! We look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,

Stanley C. Garnett
Director
Child Nutrition Division
USDA's Food and Nutrition Service

Marcia Smith, SFNS, PhD
President
American School Food Service Association

Robert H. Forney
President and CEO
America's Second Harvest

James D. Weill
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Letter for Partners